

RURAL ZONING MEETINGS SET

Board Refuses To Relax Road Requirements

BY ERIC CARLSON

Less than a month after Brunswick County spent an estimated \$10,000 to grade six dirt roads to allow school bus access, a local developer asked the county planning board last week to waive required improvements on a dirt road in his new subdivision.

In a four-to-one vote, with member Thomas Gray dissenting, the board denied a request by William Gaither for a modification of the subdivision ordinance requiring him to provide a 6-inch coquina base on a section of dirt road in Section II of Warren Landing. The 16-lot subdivision is located near the Little Shallotte River in Lockwood Folly Township.

Gaither told the board he has never encountered drainage problems in the area and cannot afford to improve the road base. He said the subdivision ordinance only requires the 6-inch base if a road is going to be paved with asphalt.

"The ordinance calls for coquina as a base for paving," he said. "I'm not going to pave it so I don't think I ought to be required to put in the base."

Planning Director John Harvey

said the subdivision ordinance requires the 6-inch coquina base as a "minimum standard" for unpaved roads in new subdivisions.

"The county just went through an episode of having to grade roads," said board member John Barbee. "I don't think we need to start weakening the subdivision ordinance. If we don't enforce it, we're setting a precedent. We need to stick with it."

"I concur," said board member and County Commissioner Jerry Jones. "I know it's expensive. It cost the county approximately \$10,000 to grade those roads. I'm not comfortable with this."

After denying Gaither's request, the board voted unanimously to approve his preliminary plat subject to the submission of an approved drainage plan.

In other business, the board gave preliminary approval to section one of Huntington Subdivision, a proposed 18-lot development next to Red Oak Subdivision on Mt. Misery Road, Northwest Township. All roads are to be built to N.C. Department of Transportation requirements.

The board also agreed to set a series of public workshops to allow

residents of rural areas of the county to discuss the new zoning ordinance with their district commissioner, their local planning board member and Agricultural Extension Agent Milton Coleman.

The workshops, all beginning at 7 p.m., will be held Tuesday, Feb. 23, at fellowship hall of the Concord Methodist Church in Supply; Wednesday, Feb. 24, at the Carolina Power and Light Visitor's Center near Southport; Thursday, Feb. 25, at the Waccamaw Community Building; Tuesday, March 2, at the fellowship hall of Andrews Chapel United Methodist Church; Wednesday, March 3, in the public assembly building at the county government complex in Bolivia; and Thursday, March 10, in the Industrial Education Center at the Leland Industrial Park.

At its next regular meeting Wednesday, Feb. 17, the planning board will meet with a special ad hoc committee to discuss modifications to the subdivision ordinance suggested by developers who have voiced opposition to the law's requirement that all subdivision improvements be in place before a plat can be recorded.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

A FAULTY PORTABLE HEATER was blamed for a Wednesday morning fire that destroyed the home of Dale and Frieda Hewett near Shallotte Point.

Couple Loses Second Home In Fire

BY SUSAN USHER

Joe Hedgecock was heading out of his house on Village Point Road Wednesday morning to work on his truck when he saw the column of black smoke rising from the vicinity of Woodcrest subdivision.

"I told my wife Allene I was going to go see what it was," he said.

By the time he arrived at the home of Dale and Frieda Hewett on Wood Road, about three miles south of Shallotte off Village Point Road, the house was already engulfed in smoke and flames, he said. "It was coming from the middle of the house."

This was the second home the Hewetts have lost to fire; the first time was about seven or eight years ago, said Mike Potts, chief of Shallotte Point Volunteer Fire Department.

Hedgecock hurried to the nearest house, where residents called the fire department. Shallotte Point

Volunteer Fire Department was the first on the scene, followed shortly by Shallotte and Ocean Isle Beach units, Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad, Brunswick EMS and the N.C. Forest Service.

No one was home at the time of the fire and no injuries were reported. The loss was estimated in excess of \$50,000.

Said Chief Potts, "He lost everything, I mean everything. You couldn't tell where a chair or dresser had been."

For firefighters to begin reconstructing what had happened, Hewett had to draw a plan of the interior of the house.

"They had left an electric heater four to five inches from a couch," said Potts. "The heater was turned away from the couch, but something went wrong with the shield inside and the radiant heat came out the back and caught the couch on fire."

The Hewetts are staying temporarily with relatives.

Three Men Use Driftwood To Paddle Stricken Boat Ashore At Local Dock

As local water rescue boats, a Coast Guard vessel and a U.S. Marine helicopter mobilized for a late-night search, three men adrift at sea in a 16-foot boat were able to paddle ashore with a piece of driftwood and tie up to the Holden Beach Fishing Pier early Sunday morning.

"They were very cold and very tired but otherwise unhurt," said Brunswick Emergency Services Director Cecil Logan.

Jerry Locklear and his brother Chris Locklear left Holden Beach with Ricky Poindexter in his 16-foot Bayliner for an afternoon of fishing Saturday, Logan said. When they didn't return, family members became alarmed and called 911 at around midnight.

Unsure of the boat's whereabouts, Logan dispatched a Coastline Water Rescue boat at Varnamtown to search the Lockwood Folly River. A

Holden Beach Water Rescue boat put in at the bridge and headed east to a rendezvous with Coastline's boat. Shallotte Water Rescue searched from Shallotte Inlet to the Holden Beach Bridge.

"We got information that they might be in the ocean, so I alerted the Coast Guard and they got ready to send a 41-footer," Logan said. "Camp Lejeune mobilized one of its helicopters."

At about 2:30 a.m. another 911 call came in from one of the Locklears, who said he had just climbed up one of the pilings of the Holden Beach pier. He said the boat's engine had failed and the three men had paddled in with a piece of four-by-four lumber they found floating at sea.

A Holden Beach Water Rescue boat brought the two men ashore and towed the boat through the inlet

to a dock at the Independence Seafood Co., Logan said.

Wright Serving On Five Panels

Rep. Thomas E. Wright of the 98th District has been appointed to five committees by N.C. House Speaker Dan Blue.

He will serve on Finance, Business and Labor (Subcommittee on Labor Relations); Children, Youth and Families; Education (Subcommittee on Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education); and Health and Human Services (Subcommittee on Human Services).

Wright, of Wilmington, represents a new minority district that includes portions of New Hanover, Pender, Columbus and Brunswick counties.

Men Wanted In Shooting Captured In Louisiana

Two Shallotte men wanted in connection with a fatal barroom shooting in Ash are expected to be returned to Brunswick County next week after waiving extradition from Louisiana, where they were captured in a routine roadblock Wednesday (Feb. 3).



GILLEY FAIRCLOTH

David Dwain Gilley, 24, of Route 7 and Leonard Wayne Faircloth, 39, of Route 3, were taken into custody by Baton Rouge, La., police at a drug interdiction roadblock and driver's license check, Det. Gene Caison of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department said Tuesday.

Police there became suspicious after noticing that the front and back license plates did not match on the car in which Gilley and Faircloth were travelling. A computer records check revealed that the two men were wanted in North Carolina.

Gilley is charged with murder in the Jan. 30 shooting death of Juan Perfecto Hernandez, 28, of Tabor City. The two allegedly got into a

fight over a woman at the Junction Lounge on N.C. 130 near Columbus County during which Gilley shot Hernandez once in the chest with a .380-caliber handgun.

Faircloth is charged with being an accessory after the fact to the felony of murder, Caison said.

After the shooting, Caison said Gilley ran out the back door and was later picked up by Faircloth, who had accompanied Gilley to the bar that night with Timothy Fulwood, 21, of Shallotte.

Fulwood gave Faircloth a ride home after the shooting, Caison said. Fulwood is not charged in the incident and is expected to be a witness in the case.

Gilley and Faircloth fled the county in a green tractor truck that was later found abandoned at a Florence, S.C., truck stop on Interstate 95, Caison said. The two are believed to have caught a ride to Texas, where

they borrowed a car from a relative and headed back east, possibly toward Florida, he said.

The car in which they were travelling was registered to a man in Houston, Texas, Caison said.

State Planner To Be Guest Of Leland Board

The Leland Planning Board will hold its regular meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. at the Leland Town Hall, 485 Village Road.

Tom Cassell, chief planner, N.C. Department of Commerce, Division of Community Assistance, will give a presentation on general planning issues and will answer questions from the planning board and citizens.

The public is invited to attend and ask questions.

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Brunswick County GOP Precincts Meet Feb. 18

The Brunswick County Republican Party will conduct precinct meetings Thursday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. for the purpose of reorganization.

In most but not all cases, said Shirley Babson, secretary, the meeting will be at the polling place: Hood's Creek, Hood's Creek Community Building; Leland, Leland Community Building; Woodburn, Leland Town Hall; Belville, DOT Building; Town Creek, Town Creek Park Community Building; Bolivia, Bolivia School cafeteria; Mosquito, home of Tom Yeagle, Sunset Harbor; Supply, Supply Volunteer Fire Department; Frying Pan, N.C.

National Guard Armory, Shallotte;

Also, Secession I, Lockwood Folly Community Building; Secession II, Bellamy's Net Shop; Shallotte, Shallotte Volunteer Fire Department; Grissetown, Holden's Produce Market; Shingletree, Calabash Volunteer Fire Department; Longwood, Roland Gore's Store; Ash, Waccamaw Community Building; Boiling Spring Lakes, Boiling Spring Lakes Volunteer Fire Department; Southport I, Jaycee Building; Southport II, American Legion Building; Oak Island I, Yaupon Beach Town Hall; Oak Island II, Long Beach Recreation Center (7:30 p.m.)

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